



# Bergamo, Brescia & Cremona

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Ristorante Gualtiero Marchesi (p146)
- ➔ Da Vittorio (p141)
- ➔ Hosteria '700 (p155)
- ➔ Osteria al Bianchi (p151)
- ➔ Colleoni & Dell'Angelo (p140)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Da Vittorio (p202)
- ➔ Albergo Orologio (p202)
- ➔ Delle Arti Design Hotel (p202)
- ➔ Agriturismo Casa Clelia (p201)
- ➔ Hotel Piazza Vecchia (p201)

## Why Go?

Medieval towns, gentle lakes hemmed in by steep hillsides, vast plains, prehistoric rock art and mighty mountains make this part of the Lombard region one of northern Italy's most underrated corners. You'd need a couple of weeks to cover the area well, so you need to make choices. Bergamo, with its medieval Città Alta (Upper Town), is a must, and it's an inspired choice if this is your point of arrival in Italy. Townies and church lovers might concentrate on the main centres (Brescia, Cremona, Crema and Lodi) which all have fascinating medieval cores. An alternative tour of plains settlements will turn up palaces, castles and forts. Wine buffs may prefer touring the Franciacorta, south of Lake Iseo. North of Bergamo, several valleys lead deep into the picturesque Orobie Alps.

## Road Distances (KM)

Brescia	59			
Cremona	98	55		
Iseo	36	21	76	
Lodi	52	88	77	95
	Bergamo	Brescia	Cremona	Iseo

## Getting Around

Bergamo, Brescia and Cremona are all well connected to each other by train, road and bus. Services also connect Brescia and Bergamo with the valleys and mountains of the north – easily the most scenic area. But the prettiest drive is across the plains where medieval forts and churches await.

### 3 PERFECT DAYS

#### Day 1: Old Bergamo

Like an eagle's eyrie, the Città Alta (Upper Town) of Bergamo sits a world apart, looking down almost with condescension on the great Lombard plains to the south. Discover its lanes, the Renaissance Piazza Vecchia, the medieval Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, the Venetian defensive walls and La Rocca fortress. The Città Alta is jammed with fine eateries and several romantic places to sleep over.

#### Day 2: Brescia & Cremona

There are plenty of options in the Lombard plains south of Bergamo. You could make a whistle-stop tour of Brescia for its old centre and Roman ruins, then shoot south to Cremona to enjoy the magnificent Piazza del Comune and its monuments and search out some of the city's violin-makers. On the return leg to Bergamo, scoot by Pizzighettone for its impressive fortress walls.

#### Day 3: Northern Mountains

North of Bergamo, various valleys lead into the pre-Alpine hills and mountains of the Orobic Alps, while routes east head to Lake Iseo, the jewel of which is the island of Monte Isola. Hill valley highlights include San Pellegrino Terme, of mineral water fame; Ardesio and its pretty centre; Branzi and its hill walks to glacial lakes; Valbondione and the nearby Serio waterfalls; and, quite simply, the chance to admire some beautiful mountain country.

## Where to Stay

With the exception of Bergamo, especially in the Città Alta, the Lombard cities of the plains are not heavily toured. Lake Iseo can be busy in July and August. In the mountain valleys, options can be scarcer, except at towns serving as ski bases in winter.

### DON'T MISS

The violin-making traditions of Cremona (p154).

## Best Churches

- Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore (p138), Bergamo
- Chiesa di San Tomè (p141), Almenno San Bartolomeo
- Duomo (p152), Cremona
- Tempio Civico dell'Incoronata (p156), Lodi
- Santuario di Santa Maria della Croce (p157), Crema

## Best Escapes

- Val Taleggio (p141)
- Lake Iseo (p144)
- Orobic Alps (p141)
- Franciacorta wine region (p148)
- Crema (p157)

## Resources

- **Brembana Valley** ([www.vallebrembana.org](http://www.vallebrembana.org)) Info about the Valle Brembana north of Bergamo.
- **Rupestre.net** ([www.rupestre.net](http://www.rupestre.net)) Useful site covering the region's prehistoric rock art.
- **Strada del Vino Franciacorta** ([www.stradadelfranciocorta.it](http://www.stradadelfranciocorta.it)) One-stop guide to the Franciacorta wine region.
- **Lago d'Iseo** ([www.lagodiseo.org](http://www.lagodiseo.org)) Info on accommodation and activities.
- **Bergamo** ([www.turismo.bergamo.it](http://www.turismo.bergamo.it)) Excellent tourist office site.